

A Comparative Study of Man Creation in the Iranian and Mesopotamian Myths and Religions

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Abstract

Myth or creation story is a symbolic narration in a culture and among people, which narrates about the beginning of this world and emergence of people. Some features of these creation myths are the same, there exist effective characters and a general plan in all of them. The creation and the functions of such features have made significant forever changes in the world. Therefore, the attitude towards creation in the primitive civilizations and the way human assumed to whom his creation belonged were highly important. In addition, why questions about the creation and other such issues which have been answered among the primitive civilizations are significant too. Considering the believes about the creation among the primitive Mesopotamian (Sumer and Babylon) and Iranian (Mazdean, Manicheism, and Zurvani), it can be concluded that each of the ancient civilizations and religions considered a philosophy for the way human being was created and its goals. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that these believes stemmed from their environments, life-styles, and experiences. For instance, in the Mazdean, this world was assumed to have a life-time and each of the concrete created ones (such as, the sky, earth, water, etc.) were supposed to be created in different stages of time. In the same religion, some event related to the world and creation (its process and philosophy) belonged to devil forces and its interferences, and human being accompanied with the concrete ones were assumed to be created by the goodness forces (Ahouramazda) in order to comfort and repel evil. Thus, breeding and living a merry life in this world were of the most important goals of creation. However, in the Manichaeism, since being close to the Mesopotamian believes which were full of ravages, there existed an inappropriate attitude towards the world and its creation. Following such believes, in Manichaeism, the creation of human being was assumed as the result of an devilish conspiracy which intended to captivate fairness in contrast to the Mazdean's. The Mazdean considered human body as being made of soil or plants that led breeding and living as absurd concepts. This assumption was almost similar to the Mesopotamian people's believes and religions because, in some Mesopotamian narrations, human being was the result of wars among Gods and emerged out of Devil Gods' blood to serve them and let Gods free from sufferings of labor.

According to the presented reasons and in response to the major question of why these differences in those myths and religions exist, it is required to mention that such views towards the processes and goals of human creation are considerable from different aspects. Firstly, the attitudes of different nations depending on their places and periods which they lived at, governments and conquering powers, and life-styles and economic conditions shape

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differently. Investigating Iranian ancient history, we can find that Iranians had a consistent government over its one thousand two hundred years history (from the Median to the emergence of Islam), and they experienced only four Iranian governmental series and one short-period Aniranian one. As a consequence, the people of Iran have lived peaceful lives without incursions. Clearly, the Mazdean who occupied most of the Iran's population then, assumed the world and life as favorable. They viewed that they and the concrete world were created for God's desire in order to have a convenient life. In contrast, nations like the Mesopotamian the was placed in-between the incursions of different governments and powers, lived a very suffering life. Then, they related their own affliction to the primitive origin and assumed their goal of creation as being forced labors for Gods. Likewise, there exist some similarities about the creation philosophy among the ancient nations and religions. Some of these similarities were caused by the common experiences and similar environments and life-styles of these people, and some other similarities were the consequences of adapted believes. One of the similarities between the myths of Mazdean and Manichaeism (Babylonian) was that the concrete creation was the result of the body of Gods (Kingo) or Human Gods (Keyumars) and their combination with soil resulted in creation. In the Babylonian myths, Gods' blood integrated with soil that led to creation of human male and female, and in the Mazdean myth, a part of Keyumars (his sperm) was integrated with the soil and resulted in the first human couple on the world. We can consider similarities and differences of creations in Mazdean, Manichaeism, and Mesopotamian from another perspective. Therefore, in all these three religions, myths of this created world and concrete creation were based on the bodies of the characters beyond human being, the only difference was, in the Mazdean myths, this character was anti devil (Keyumars) and belonged to Gods in the Gods' side. However, in the Manichaeism and Mesopotamian (Babylonian) myths, the creation stemmed from the body of devilish Gods, or processed in the hands of demons out of their own skin and flesh.

key words

creation of man, Iran, Mesopotamia, Mazdean, Manichaeism, Zurvani.

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